

A One Day Involve Training
Radical Hospitality: Creating Beloved Community for All Children
SATURDAY AUGUST 8, 2009
9:00 AM – 3:00PM
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta

The purpose of this *Involve* workshop is to train religious educators, ministers and lay leaders to minister to children with special challenges and insure their successful inclusion into the life of our faith communities. The Involve workshop usually includes 15 hours of training; this one day training will incorporate as much material as possible from the longer training which includes: assessment methods, teaching strategies, sensitivity training, hands-on training activities, and discussions concerning pastoral and congregational care.

Serving children with special needs is an immensely complicated process. While our congregations are not social service agencies, it is critically important for religious education, pastoral care and social advocates to understand the complexity and enormous challenges and stress families experience with a special needs child. In order to provide an effective and compassionate ministry, congregations need to understand the complex spiritual, ethical and moral concerns that affect how we as a society treat children and youth with special needs. *Involve* training will help us build a welcoming ministry for all families that want to attend our congregations. Opening our hearts and minds to serving children with special needs strengthens our commitment to the Unitarian Universalist principle of affirming the worth and dignity of every person. Ministering to children with differences helps us not only to be more creative about ministry to all our children, but also helps us as adults to reassess or reaffirm our own beliefs. Lessons of compassion, caring and an acceptance of differences benefit all of us, young and old.



Workshop leader Sally Patton, Ed. M. Developmental Psychology has advocated and worked for children with disabilities for over 35 years. For the past several years, she has written and conducted workshops on ministering to children with special needs in faith communities and on spiritual parenting of children who have been labeled. She also offers private consultations for parents who are interested in exploring the spiritual questions that arise from parenting a child with a special needs label. Sally is the author of *Welcoming Children with Special Needs, a Guidebook for Faith Communities*. Sally conducts Involve Trainings around the country to train religious educators, ministers, and lay leaders to assist and educate faith communities as to the importance of ministering to children with special challenges. Sally has also started a nonprofit organization, *The Creative Soul of Children, Inc* (www.thecreativesoulofchildren.org) to promote seeing past labels to the whole child. Sally is the mother of two children, one of whom has a special needs label.